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NATO CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL FROM WASHINGTON

SUBJECT: POLITICAL ANALYSIS: THE KREMLIN RESURRECTS A

POETIC SUMMING-UP OF THE STALIN ERA

1. ON NOVEMBER 4, PRAVDA ANNOUNCED THAT MOSCOW RADIO

WOULD BROADCAST THAT EVENING THE LATE ALEKSANDR

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TVARDOVSKIY'S POEM "VISTA BEYOND VISTA." FIRST PUBLISHED

IN PRAVDA ON APRIL 29, 1960, THIS EXTRAORDINARY WORK ATTACKS STALIN FOR HIS BRUTAL POLITICAL METHODS, SELF-GLORIFICATION, AND NEGLECT OF AGRICULTURE WHILE LAUDING HIM FOR DIRECTION OF THE SOVIET INDUSTRIALIZATION PROGRAM OF THE 1930S AND FOR PLAYING AN INSPIRATIONAL ROLE DURING WORLD WAR II. TVARDOVSKIY'S INQUEST ON THE STALINIST PAST WAS CLEARLY AIMED AT DISCREDITING THE DEFENDERS OF RESIDUAL STALINIST ORTHODOXY IN THE USSR; ITS LATEST AIRING SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN USED BY BREZHNEV TO UNDERCUT HIS CONSERVATIVE OPPONENTS RATHER THAN BY CRITICS OF HIS GROWING CULT OF PERSONALITY.

2. WHAT THE POEM SAYS:

3. "VISTA BEYOND VISTA" (ZA DALYU-DAL) PAYS TRIBUTE TO STALIN THE INDUSTRIALIZER AND WARLORD. HE IS ACCLAIMED FOR PROMOTING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOVIET UNION'S EASTERN REGIONS IN PARTICULAR AND THE BUILDING OF A STRONG METALLURGICAL BASE THERE. THIS POLICY IS IMPLIED TO HAVE INSURED THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE AND IS DIRECTLY LINKED WITH SOVIET MILITARY SUCCESSES IN WORLD WAR II. STALIN IS ALSO PRAISED FOR RESOLUTE COMMAND OF THE WAR EFFORT, WITHOUT A TRACE OF REBUKE FOR HIS COLOSSAL BLUNDERING IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE CONFLICT.

4. A FAR LARGER PART OF THE ODE, HOWEVER, IS DEVOTED TO CRITICISM OF STALINIST VICE:

(A)--THE PURGES OF OLD BOLSHEVIKS AND MASS DEPORTATIONS OF ENTIRE NATIONALITY GROUPS ARE CONDEMNED.

(B)--STALIN'S PERSONAL INTERVENTIONS INTO ALL SPHERES OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY ARE VIEWED AS AN ABNORMALITY.

(C)--HIS CRUELTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH HIS NON-EUROPEAN ETHNIC ORIGIN.

(D)--HIS PERSONALITY CULT IS REJECTED AS ANTI-LENINIST.

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(E)--MOSCOW'S SKYSCRAPERS AND THE VOLGA-DON CANAL ARE ATTRIBUTED TO HIS MEGALOMANIA.

(F)--DISREGARD OF THE RURAL AREAS AFTER WORLD WAR II IS SHOWN AS A FACTOR THAT BROUGHT THE NATION TO THE BRINK OF DESPAIR.

5. A SPIRIT OF PROGRESS AND INTOLERANCE TOWARD OPPONENTS,

AS WELL AS RESPONSIVENESS TO PUBLIC OPINION, INFORMS THE PASSAGES THAT DEAL WITH THE POST-STALIN YEARS:

(A)--THE MORAL CLIMATE IS ALLEGED TO HAVE IMPROVED VASTLY.

(B)--WARNING IS GIVEN NOT TO IMPEDE MOVEMENT AWAY FROM ROUTINE PRACTICE.

(C)--CONSULTATION WITH THE MASSES IS URGED FOR THE RECTIFICATION OF SOCIAL DEFECTS.

6. WHY THE RESURRECTION?

7. PRAVDA LISTED IN ITS DOMESTIC RADIO BROADCASTS FOR NOVEMBER 4, 1976: "21.00 -- 'NEW LITERARY RECORDINGS.'" A. TVARDOVSKIY 'VISTA BEYOND VISTA.' POEM. READ BY M. ULYANOV." THE READING WAS SCHEDULED TO LAST 30 MINUTES, AMPLE TIME FOR COVERAGE OF THE WORK IN ITS ENTIRETY. EVEN IF CENSORED OR ABRIDGED, HOWEVER, THE MERE FACT OF THE POEM'S CITATION IN PRAVDA WOULD HAVE STIRRED UP UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT.

8. IN SPITE OF ITS PRAISE OF STALIN FOR HIS WORK IN BUILDING UP SOVIET POWER AND DEFENDING THE USSR, THE POEM IS ESSENTIALLY ANTI-STALINIST. IT CALLS ATTENTION TO NEGATIVE FEATURES OF STALINISM WHICH KHRUSHCHEV OFTEN DENOUNCED BUT WHICH HAVE USUALLY BEEN SWEEPED UNDER THE RUG DURING THE REIGN OF HIS SUCCESSORS. RADIO MOSCOW'S LONG SUBSERVIENCE TO THE INTERESTS OF THE POWER ELITE LEAVES SMALL DOUBT THAT SOMEONE AT A HIGH LEVEL FELT THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO REOPEN THE CASE AGAINST STALINISM.

9. ANTI-BREZHNEV FORCES, ASSUMING THEY EXIST AND WIELD CONFIDENTIAL

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INFLUENCE, MIGHT HAVE SOUGHT TO USE THE POEM AS A KIND OF PROTEST AGAINST THE RISING ACCLAIM OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY. LIKE STALIN BEFORE HIM, BREZHNEV IN MAY WAS NAMED A MARSHAL OF THE SOVIET UNION AMID MUCH FANFARE ABOUT HIS SPECIAL EXECUTIVE TALENTS AND IN OCTOBER WAS HAILED BY COLLEAGUES AS "VOZHD," OR SUPREME LEADER (BY CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY AND POLITBURO MEMBER KIRILENKO ON OCTOBER 14, POLITBURO CANDIDATE ALIYEV ON OCTOBER 16, AND A COUPLE OF LOCAL SPEAKERS AT THE USSR SUPREME SOVIET MEETING ON OCTOBER 29-30).

10. PRO-BREZHNEV FORCES, ON THE OTHER HAND, COULD HAVE WELCOMED THE POEM AS A BLOW AT SENTIMENT FOR THE RESTORATION OF OLD-STYLE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE AND HOSTILITY TO THE WEST. BREZHNEV'S ECONOMIC POLICY WORKS, PUBLISHED IN

1975, REVEAL THAT AT THE DECEMBER 1969 PLENUM HE REBUKED COMMUNISTS WHO WERE NOSTALGIC FOR THE INDUSTRIAL ORDER OF THE STALIN ERA: "SOME COMRADES...RECOLLECT PAST TIMES AND IN ESSENCE PROPOSE A RETURN TO THE METHODS OF EXCEPTIONAL INJUNCTION. I THINK THAT THIS IS AN UNSUITABLE

RECIPE." (L. I. BREZHNEV, OB OSNOVNYKH VOPROSAKH EKONOMICHESKOY POLITIKI NA SOVREMENNOM ETAPE. RECHI I DOKLADY, MOSCOW, 1975.) NONETHELESS, AS LATE AS THE EVE OF THE OCTOBER 1976 PLENUM THERE WAS LOCAL ACCLAM OF THE "IRON HAND" WITH WHICH STALIN'S COMMISSAR FOR HEAVY INDUSTRY, G. K. ORDZHONIKIDZE, RAN THE SOVIET INDUSTRIAL MACHINE (KOMMUNIST OF ARMENIA, OCTOBER 22, 1976)--THE IDENTICAL PHRASE USED IN A PEJORATIVE SENSE ABOUT STALIN'S RULE IN "VISTA BEYOND VISTA."

11. ARGUING FOR THE PROBABILITY OF BREZHNEV'S APPROVAL OF THE REVIVAL OF TVARDOVSKIY'S WORK IS HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH:

(A)--THE POST-1964 PROGRAM FOR THE RECOVERY OF AGRICULTURE FROM DECADES OF UNDERINVESTMENT;

(B)--THE THEME OF OPENNESS IN PARTY WORK AND ATTENTION TO CITIZENS' LETTERS TO THE AUTHORITIES;

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(C)--THE VIRGIN SOIL AND SPACE PROGRAMS LAUDED IN THE POEM.

12. SUSLOV POSSIBLE TARGET

13. PERHAPS FOREMOST AMONG THE CURRENT LEADERS WHO WOULD OBJECT TO THE RESURFACING OF "VISTA BEYOND VISTA" IS SUSLOV, PARTICIPANT IN PARTY PURGES AND NATIONALITY DEPORTATIONS OF THE 1930S AND 1940S.

14. THIS HYPOTHESIS FITS WITH A FEW KNOWN IN THE EQUATION OF PARTISAN POLITICS AS PRACTICED IN THE SOVIET UNION. OF LATE, THE MOST PRONOUNCED DIFFERENCE IN THE POLICY STATEMENTS OF BREZHNEV AND SUSLOV CONCERNS THE DANGER OF WAR. WHILE BREZHNEV ADHERES TO THE TRADITIONAL VIEW THAT THE WAR DANGER CONTINUES, HE CLAIMS THAT THE IMMEDIACY OF THE THREAT HAS RECEDED. SUSLOV, IN CONTRAST, ARGUES THAT THE DANGER IS REAL AND PRESENT. IN THIS, SUSLOV HAS BEEN ARGUING IN TYPICAL NEO-STALINIST TERMS, WHICH WOULD MAKE HIM VULNERABLE TO CRITICISM OF THE SORT VOICED BY TVARDOVSKIY. MOSCOW RUMOR HAS IT THAT SUSLOV IS WORKING VERY LITTLE AND MAY SOON LEAVE THE PARTY

SECRETARIAT. ROBINSON

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